



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**  
**MISSION IN KOSOVO**

**Remarks of Ambassador Werner Wnendt,  
Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo,**

**Roundtable on “The Role and Functioning of the Municipal Officers  
for Gender Equality in Kosovo”**

**Prishtinë/Priština, 14 November 2006**

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*The following are opening remarks given at a roundtable organized by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.*

Ladies and Gentleman, Deputy Prime Minister,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this event, which reflects the OSCE's deep involvement in advocating for gender equality within government and throughout society..

Today we are here to demonstrate our commitment to promote gender equality and women's rights. This roundtable aims to launch the report on “The Role and Functioning of the Municipal Officers for Gender Equality in Kosovo” and to provide a forum for all of you to discuss the challenges faced by Municipal Officials for Gender Equality in their everyday work.

The purpose of the report has been to assess participation in the decision-making process of the gender officers.

How do Municipal Officials for Gender Equality function, how do they interact with other actors in the municipal administration?

Is the Law on Gender Equality and other appropriate legislation implemented and if yes, to what extent?

Through the years, the OSCE has been ensuring compliance with human rights and rule of law standards in order to protect women's rights and mainstream gender equality.

The Mission created the first “Equal Opportunity Unit” which was later relocated into the Office of the Prime Minister's Advisory Office.

We have provided extensive written comments on draft legislation affecting women's rights and, in a number of cases - such as the Anti-Discrimination Law and Law on Gender Equality - we not only assisted in drafting the law, but also have monitored and facilitated its further implementation.

The Mission has been actively involved in capacity building in gender equality. In both the Kosovo Judicial Institute and the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates, the OSCE has provided a series of training sessions on equal treatment and anti-discrimination, with a focus on gender equality and women's rights protection. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has also sponsored

training for Assembly members on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Moreover, through its field presence, the OSCE is proactively monitoring the compliance with the law and the human rights standards regarding gender equality and participation of women in local governance.,

Our Municipal Teams, deployed in different regions, are tasked to monitor gender issues in the municipalities, and functioning of the municipal executive and legislative structures, such as the Officers for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Committees and I know that a lot of them are present today and I'd like to thank them for coming.

The report presented today is about your work and I hope that it will bring some issues to the attention of central and local level authorities. Recommendations of this report and today's roundtable shall contribute to enhancing the role of the Gender Officers working in the Municipalities and to help Kosovo local authorities to implement of the Law on Gender Equality more fully.

Let me conclude by pointing out that promoting the role of women is not only the requirement of the gender equality. As mentioned in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and in the OSCE Gender Action Plan, empowerment of women is seen as one of the means to prevent future conflict and stability. Women's empowerment should be a priority in development and human rights activities. Promotion of gender equality and participation of women in democratic processes stays also in line with the spirit of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan and the European Partnership Action Plan, thus marking one of the benchmarks of Kosovo's readiness to join the European Union and the European community of modern democracies.